States' Rights Party Aide Is Named To Defend Ray

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Savannah, Ga., March 21 (AP)—J. B. Stoner, an attorney long associated with anti-Jewish, anti-Negro causes, has been retained by James Earl Ray in his effort to win a new trial in the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Mr. Stoner's office announced today.

Edward R. Fields, director of the militantly segregationist National States' Rights party, said Mr. Stoner would help Ray change his plea from guilty to innocent and would ask for another trial.

99-Year Term

Mr. Stoner is a National States' Rights lawyer whose office is located in the party headquarters here.

Ray was sentenced to 99 years in prison after he pleaded guilty in Memphis to last year's sniper-slaying of Dr. King.

Mr. Fields said Mr. Stoner was en route to Nashville where Ray was lodged in Cell 4 in the Tennessee State Penitentiary. He said Mr. Stoner would confer with Ray tomorrow morning.

Lake Russell, the warden, said he did not yet know whether Mr. Stoner would be allowed to see Ray.

"We'll let him see him if he can present the proper credentials," Mr. Russell said. "He'll have to show that he [Ray] actually hired him as his lawyer."

Not On File

In Memphis, court officials said there was nothing on file to indicate that Mr. Stoner had been designated attorney of record by Ray.

Judge W. Preston Battle, Jr., who presided in the Ray case, disclosed Wednesday that he had been notified by Ray that he wanted to withdraw his guilty plea and stand trial for first-degree murder.

The judge said also that Ray wrote him he had fired his attor-

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Segregationist Is Ray's Lawyer

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ney, Percy Foreman of Houston.

Ray had been scheduled for trial April 7 when he abruptly switched plans and pleaded guilty March 10. The 99-year sentence was prearranged by the state and Mr. Foreman.

Ray was reported to have told officers who accompanied him from Memphis to the Nashville prison that he had changed his mind and wished he had gone on trial and taken his chances of getting a life sentence rather than the electric chair.

Prevents Early Parole

Under a life sentence, Ray would be eligible for parole in 13 years. However, the 99-year term prevents him from seeking parole for 30 years.

Mr. Stoner would be Ray's third attorney. He had also dismissed the former Birmingham (Ala.) mayor, Art Hanes.

Mr. Stoner, 44, has been involved in Ku Klux Klan and anti-Jewish activities since boyhood. At 16, he was an organizer and officer of a Chattanooga (Tenn.) Klan and once was shown as the Kleagle of Tennessee.

Removal Of Jews

In 1945, he formed the "Stoner anti-Jewish party" and mailed out pamphlets urging removal of the Jews. In 1952, he announced formation of the Christian anti-Jewish party and urged deportation of Jews and confiscation of their property for distribution to "Christian Americans."

He wrote a book entitled "The Gospel of Jesus Christ Versus the Jews."

Mr. Stoner was graduated from an Atlanta law school in 1952 after two years of study, passing a state bar examination while still a student.